

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 187972

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 187972

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CVIS, LY

SUBJECT: LIBYAN PASSPORT PROBLEM

REF: TRIPOLI 1137

1. DEPARTMENT BELIEVES RECONSIDERATION AND DECISION ON PASSPORT ISSUE TIMELY SINCE SEPT. 1 HAS COME AND GONE AND IT APPEARS THAT THE USG WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH QADHAFI/ JALLUD RCC FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. DEPARTMENT PARTICULARLY CONCERNED OVER PROSPECT OF EROSION EMBASSY STAFF, ESPECIALLY IN COMMO AND SECRETARIAL AREAS RESULTING FROM NORMAL TRANSFER AND OTHER SITUATIONS. SUCH EROSION WILL INEVITABLY DETRACT FROM OPERATING EFFECTIVENESS OF POST, THEREBY VITIATING RATIONALE BEHIND CONTINUED MAINTENANCE OF EMBASSY (SEE PARA 2). FINALLY, NOW THAT EVERY OTHER MAJOR COUNTRY REPRESENTED IN LIBYA HAS AGREED TO PUT ARABIC IN ITS PASSPORTS IN SOME FORM, WE SEE NO PROSPECT THAT LARG WILL

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PAGE 02 STATE 187972

MODIFY POLICY IT HAS PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED TO SUIT USG.

2. SINCE DEPARTMENT WISHES TO MAINTAIN AND STAFF POST IN ORDER TO PRESERVE ESSENTIAL REPORTING, CONSULAR AND PROTECTION SERVICES, SOME ADJUSTMENT IN US PASSPORT POLICY APPLICABLE TO LIBYA MUST BE FOUND. (SWISS NOTE CITED TRIPOLI 1143 IS A "BEAU GESTE" BUT AS EMBASSY POINTS OUT EVEN SWISS HAVE IN FACT USED ARABIC STAMP TO PRESERVE THEIR EMBASSY IN TRIPOLI.)

3. ACCORDINGLY, WE PROPOSE AS A TEST CASE TO SEEK A VISA FROM LIBYAN EMBASSY, WASHINGTON, FOR A COMMUNICATOR TO REPLACE SCHAUER, AFTER PLACING BILINGUAL RUBBER STAMP IN HIS PASSPORT. IF QUERIED BY LIBYAN EMBASSY, DEPARTMENT WOULD REPLY THAT THIS PROCEDURE WILL BE USED ONLY FOR USG OFFICIALS TRAVELING TO LIBYA ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS, IN INTEREST OF PRESERVING OFFICIAL RELATIONS WITH LARG. IF LARG ANNOUNCES THAT USG "HAS AGREED TO PUT ARABIC IN ITS PASSPORTS," DEPARTMENT IN REPLY TO ANY QUERIES HERE WOULD STATE THIS PROCEDURE IS NOT RPT NOT BEING GENERALIZED AND WILL BE USED ONLY ON CASE BY CASE BASIS TO STAFF EMBASSY TRIPOLI. SIMULTANEOUSLY, EMBASSY TRIPOLI WOULD BE INSTRUCTED TO ISSUE VISAS TO LARG OFFICIALS ASSIGNED WASHINGTON.

4. DEPARTMENT REALIZES THERE WILL BE REQUESTS BY US COMPANIES IN LIBYA FOR DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE SAME SERVICE FOR DEPENDENTS OF ITS EMPLOYEES, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS LESS THAN BEFORE NATIONALIZATIONS. WE PLAN TO REPLY EXCEPTION TO PASSPORT POLICY FOR US OFFICIAL PURPOSES IS BASED ON NATIONAL, AS DISTINCT FROM PRIVATE COMMERCIAL, INTERESTS AND THAT IF LARG WANTS US PERSONNEL TO OPERATE ITS OIL INDUSTRY, WE ASSUME IT WILL PERMIT THEM AND THEIR DEPENDENTS TO ENTER LIBYA WITHOUT ARABIC STAMP.

5. UNTIL DEFINITIVE DECISION IS MADE TO PROCEED WITH ARABIC STAMP FOR SCHAUER REPLACEMENT, EMBASSY TRIPOLI SHOULD CONTINUE REQUEST ADVISORY OPINIONS FOR ALL NON-STUDENT LIBYAN VISA APPLICANTS. MEANTIME, YOUR COMMENTS REQUESTED ON FOREGOING. RUSH

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